

secured, the children would receive endless benefit. There is no doubt that the care of children is one of the most beautiful of a woman's duties, and that a lady who loved them could happily earn her livelihood in this way. It promised well, and perhaps in some instances is working well; but, alas! why did the spirit of avarice so soon destroy the real beauty of the scheme? We know that the poorest, most ignorant nurse girl does not work without wages, and that her people would not let her do it. We know that a responsible nurse demands and gets from £18 to £25 a year. What has been the cruel course taken towards the educated gentlewoman? Advertisements throng our papers. "A good home is offered to a young gentlewoman who will undertake the entire charge of four children. No salary." In some liberal instances "Church privileges" are added as an inducement. Where a salary is offered it seldom reaches £18—and this requires that the lady should give all her mental as well as physical powers to her employer. She is required to teach English, French, and music; cut out and make the clothes, and attend to the care of the children's bodies. This gentlewoman is a sort of compendium machine—the nurse, the governess, the dress-maker, all harmoniously wrapped in one human parcel, and labelled "a lady by birth!" The offer of a home is one which may be a great inducement to a poor lady; but I would remind her, and those ladies who shower their niggardly advertisements upon us, that an ordinary nurse demands a good home in addition to her wages, and gets it. So do the housemaids, the cooks, and the footmen—even lazy little "buttons" gets it! Will some higher-minded members of our class offer employment to ladies on terms at least as good as those their servants receive? It looks ill for England that the poverty of so many of her well-born daughters should be the warrant for their ill-paid slavery. Try first if they can do the work they essay to do, and then pay them "not grudgingly nor of necessity."

—M. D.



Books.

"En hoexkens ende boexkens"

"In a neat little nook and in a little book."—

THOMAS KEMPIS.

Morale Familère-Contes, Récits, Souvenirs et Conseils d'un Père à ses Enfants par P. J. Stahl (J. Hetzel et Cie. 18, Rue Jacob, Paris, 3s.) Ouvrage Couronné.

This book, which has reached a fifteenth edition, is a collection of stories sent from time to time to a children's magazine. "I have more than one little friend," says the author, "to whom much that is in this book will come home, though I may have never spoken to them about it all. If, when they read, they find that I am very clever in having known so much about them, and if they profit by my advice in print more than they would ever have profited by any spoken word, it is enough for me." And the author has done his best to let his 'moral' run through his stories, unobtrusively, yet always present; there is, as he says, no "starch" in the book. The stories are all short, and many are gems. There is nothing (outside Andersen) prettier than "The Four Crickets," "The Adventures of the Doll and the leaden Soldier," "The Blacksmith's Grave," "The Ship of Dreams," "The Joys of Men," "The Spinning Woman carved in Stone"; while among the lighter papers we find a thoughtful array on "children's books," which ends with these singular words, "I suppose one does not want to count one's intimate friends by the thousand. If in the world's crowd we can meet some few worthy of being treated as brothers, life-long friends, let us thank God and man for them. Even so, a good book is an intimate friend. Each of us has a hundred such; let us not complain."

We should like to quote "The Joys of Men" and "The Blacksmith's Grave," but we prefer to let readers guess or read for themselves the story connected with this epitaph.

Celui qui est couché ici
 Petrus Blum le Forgeron
 A travaillé tant qu'il a été debout.
 Il a laissé,
 comme héritage,
 à ses fils leur vieille mère
 à soigner et son exemple à suivre.
 La mère est tranquille
 Car l'exemple du père, ses fils le suivront.

We may add that the stories, though intended for children, are not in any way written 'down' to the powers of beginners.

Three books on reading: (1) "L'art de la lecture," 3s.; (2) "La lecture en action," 3s.; (3) "Petit traité de la lecture à haute voix," 1s.; all by E. Legouvé, and published by Hetzel, Paris.

E. Legouvé, who was quoted once or twice in the last number of the *Parents' Review*, is an enthusiast on the study and teaching of reading; and, by dint of his varied anecdotes, his autobiographic touches and his love for his subject, he has managed to make his books as interesting as they are instructive. He prefaces his work with the official document addressed by the Government to the head-masters of France, in which the importance of the teaching of reading is fully recognised; and he dedicates his work to the pupils of his own classes who, as masters in French schools, will, in after days, be able to influence thousands of lives for good. There is no uncertain note given here. Reading is an art, and means far more than the correct enunciation of phrase, poem, or story. It is the sure guide to all true appreciation of literature, the road to thoughtful criticism, the touchstone of uncertain and unsatisfactory work.

These three books before us rather overlap one another, and there is no need to refer to each separately. Of course the writer tells us how he learnt to read, and how he still continues his studies—reading and reciting to the birds in woods and meadows. For the voice in the first place requires most careful training; and when you have mastered the great difficulty of speaking (most people cannot speak), you have before you training in pronunciation, breathing, and economy of sound. Each of these subjects has its appropriate anecdotes, and in each chapter M. Legouvé has something new to say, which he says energetically.

On the subject of reading in elementary schools he is very sensible. Knowing full well that with children, as with adults, the truth is "non seulement ils lisent mal, mais ils rougiraient de bien lire." Whether the reasons he gives are sufficient, we should not like to say. Personally we should like to add a fourth to his three, and to suggest that just because good reading does show what the man himself is, so do people shrink from attempting it, for human nature is proud of being thought vicious, but does not like to get a character for anything that savours of goodness.

A good deal of his work is given up to minute accounts of the methods of actors, and indeed he believes so thoroughly in the French Theatre that he tells us with pride of the actors who have been his pupils, and of those justly famous readers who have in some cases combined the art of acting on the boards of the theatres with the teaching of reading in the highest schools of France.

For the actor, if he is worth anything, must understand the golden rules of speech—viz., the rule of punctuation, the rule of the key word, the rules of breathing, of economising strength, of quietness in word and deed. How M. Legouvé enunciates and examines these rules we do not mean to tell; but if his books were adapted to the English language and put into competent hands, vast indeed would be the improvement in English reading.

The most important chapters for a Frenchman (though less important

for a foreigner) are those devoted to a minute examination of certain passages from the treasures of French literature.

There is not a dull page in these three books; and if English people who are interested in reading do not care to buy the three, they ought at least to spend a shilling on the "Petit Traité," which is in the main a reprint of part of one of the other volumes; when they have bought this, they will send for the others. But English people do not care about reading; and we are so negligent of all higher intellectual training that we actually require a government to step in and say that we shall learn to speak and to read our own language. The Government has stepped in; and in twenty years time, if we are not careful, the clear, careful, good reading of the masterpieces of English literature will be an art professed, practised, and understood only by those who have been educated not at Eton and Harrow, but—in Board Schools.—NEMO.

Prizes.

1.—A Prize of *One Guinea* for the best study of a child, two years of age; defining, so far as possible, the child's knowledge and powers at that age—2000 words. The prize lapses if no "study" good enough for publication is sent in. MSS. marked "Prize Essay" should be sent to the Publishers between the 15th and 18th of July. No limit of age. A (sufficiently distinctive) *nom de plume* should be adopted by all competitors for prizes.

2.—A Prize of *Ten Shillings* for the best Floral Calendar, dating from April 18th to May 18th. Limit of age, seventeen. Other conditions as for No. 1.

The "Art" competitions proposed in our February number should be sent (with *nom de plume*, and with no address) to Mrs. F. Steinthal, Wharfemead, Ilkley, before the end of April. The age of the little competitors should be on the work.

MSS. directed to the Editor should reach the Publishers by the 24th of the month; other communications by the 30th.

We again beg for contributions to "By the Way," and "Books." "Notes and Queries" appear to come in more readily than these.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.—The original circular describing a 4d. Magazine (48 pp.) does not apply to the "Parents' Review," which is a 6d. Magazine (80 pp.), 6s. a year (ordered through booksellers), or, post free, 7s. 6d. In every case where the Magazine is sent by post, the postage for one copy for a year is 1s. 6d. We hope this information will save our correspondents some little trouble.

We beg to thank our subscribers for their zealous and extremely successful efforts to introduce the "Parents' Review."